

Experimental Program Standards

Professional Services Division

October 24, 2007

Overview of this Report

This report brings back an update on stakeholder input on the Experimental Program Standards to the COA before they go to the Commission for approval.

Staff Recommendation

Staff requests review of and discussion of recommendations to the Experimental Program Standards in order to recommend their approval at the December Commission meeting.

Background

In October 2006, draft Experimental Program Standards were first presented to the COA. Input from the COA, Work Group, Commission and other stakeholders was provided and incorporated into the Program Standards.

At the August Commission meeting, the Commissioners had several comments and additional information they suggested be added to the Experimental Program Standards. They are as follows:

1—There is concern that information about outcomes is mentioned only in **Standard 3: Program Design**. The standard is as follows:

The proposal submits a complete and thorough description of the proposed program. The proposal includes details of the activities and coursework that candidates will complete as well as indicators of outcomes of candidate competence for program completion. The proposal must outline all essential elements of the research design, as appropriate to the nature of the inquiry. This includes the intended outcomes and evidence that will be collected."

One recommendation is that this last sentence also be included in **Standard 2: Research Question(s)** or **Standard 4: Research Design**.

2—Concern was expressed that the time limit indicated in **Standard 4: Research Design** is too open ended and that there needs to be an firm limit to the possible length of an experiment. The current language is:

The proposal clearly illustrates the connection of the Program Philosophy and Goals, Research Questions and Program Design to the implementation of the experimental program and investigation of the issue(s) being investigated as well as a timeline for the investigation. Standards of scholarship will be applied as part of the peer and staff review used to approve, monitor and review proposals and reports. The length of time for the experimental program is provided and is appropriate to the focus of the inquiry."

One recommendation is that a firm seven year maximum time limit be established. Programs would be able to propose a shorter experiment, but nothing longer than 7 years.

3—In the section **Procedures for Submitting an Experimental Program for Commission Approval** there is concern that a prospective program sponsor might believe that an experimental program only needs to respond to the Experimental Program Standards and not the Common Standards. The 4th bullet currently reads

“Institution or program sponsor submits the full proposal, addressing the Standards for Experimental Programs.”

The recommendation is that there be a revision that reflects that proposals must respond to both the Standards for Experimental Programs and the Common Standards.

4—In the section **Procedures for Implementing an Experimental Program**, Commissioners were concerned that it was not clear that the results of experimental programs should be disseminated to other educator preparation programs; therefore, it is recommended that an additional bullet be added that addresses the dissemination of results.

Next Steps

If the COA decides to edit the draft Experimental Program standards at the October meeting, staff will make the revisions to the draft standards. If the edits are minor, the Experimental Program Standards would still be presented to the Commission for approval at the December 2007 meeting.

If the revisions are more significant, then staff would bring the draft Experimental Program Standards back to the January 2008 COA meeting and then take the standards to the Commission at a meeting early in 2008.

Once the Experimental Program Standards are approved by the Commission, steps toward implementation would begin. The approved standards would be posted on the website and the field would be notified of them through a coded correspondence, PSD News and with announcements at professional conferences, such as CalCouncil, CAPEA, etc. In addition, there is discussion of holding technical assistance meetings for possible sponsors of experimental programs.

The appendix that follows provides the Experimental Program Standards without any of the proposed changes included.

Appendix 1

Experimental Programs for Educator Preparation

Rationale for Experimental Programs

The experimental program option is designed to encourage innovation in educator preparation and investigation of those innovations, with the aim of increasing the profession's understanding of professional learning and improving professional practice for the benefit of all students in California. Experimental programs were provided for in Ed Code 44273(a) as a way for programs of "merit and the potential of improving the quality of service authorized by the credential" to be developed. In the past, few programs have been submitted under this option. The revised Experimental Program standards take in account this underutilization and are designed to encourage innovation with accountability to the profession.

Experimental programs can be proposed and are encouraged in any credential area. There is a need for high quality educators who serve in leadership and support roles who promote and facilitate learning for all students as well as classroom teachers.

Institutions or program sponsors are particularly encouraged to develop proposals for experimental programs to address specific needs in California: the need for quality teachers in low performing schools, and/or those serving large numbers of minority students, poor students, and English language learners, critical needs for teachers in specific areas, such as math and science, as well as the need for highly qualified teachers given the expected future teacher shortage as well as impending teacher shortage in the state of California.

Un- and under prepared teachers are found in disproportionate numbers in low-performing California schools and in schools serving large numbers of minority students, poor students, and English language learners. Also, little is known about how to prepare teachers to teach science to English learners and how to use the opportunities science and other academic areas offer to develop academic literacy. Institutions or program sponsors are encouraged to develop programs aimed at preparing teachers for these areas of great need.

California's educator work force is prone to fluctuation and change. There will always be a need for highly qualified and effective educators. Institutions or program sponsors are encouraged to develop experimental programs, incorporating innovative and new ways designed to attract individuals to the profession and prepare highly qualified educators to meet the needs of California's public school students..

In general, experimental program options should be designed with the aim of improving educator preparation and professional practice for the benefit of all educators and students in California's schools. Program improvement should be an ongoing professional process whereby programs develop, implement and investigate preparation approaches informed by the latest research and literature. The results of these investigations should then be disseminated within the professional and the policy arena to encourage, as appropriate, broader use and adaptation to current practice.

Goals for Experimental Programs

The goals for experimental programs include the following:

1. Program completers have the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities as identified by the Commission's candidate competence standards to teach and support student learning for all children in California public schools.
2. Program completers can, through their practice, contribute to the success of English Learners, closing the achievement gap and/or meet the needs of other populations that have been underserved.
3. Experimental programs contribute to the scholarship on educator preparation to improve student learning so that all students meet the state-adopted content standards.

Policy Principles Underlying the 2007 Redesign of Experimental Program Policies by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

The principles are guidelines related to the proposal, review and evaluation of Experimental Programs.

1. The Commission encourages experimental programs that seek to resolve significant questions regarding educator preparation. Experimental programs must have a scholarly focus, and proposals must be research-based and clearly identify the issue being investigated, the intended outcomes and the evidence that will be collected.
2. Colleges, universities and school district educator preparation programs are encouraged to develop experimental programs that depart from the Commission's program standards for traditional programs if the proposed program meets the goals of the statement above. The Common Standards will be a part of all proposals and submissions—both traditional and experimental.
3. Experimental programs will be approved providing their proposal has the potential to improve the quality of service authorized by the credential as required by Education Code.
4. The Committee on Accreditation will approve experimental programs that adhere to the experimental program standards, including indicators of candidate competence and how they will be assessed. As part of this process the institution must describe how it will investigate and evaluate the program. Biennial reports of research findings will be required as a part of the accreditation cycle.
5. An Experimental program proposal will be determined to have merit based upon an analysis of its proposed design to address fundamental issues in schooling in California and preparing educators for those settings.
6. Experimental programs will be evaluated based upon the proposal and the data collected related to program quality and candidate competence. The potential for improving the quality of service authorized by the credential will be determined on the basis of analysis of the indicators of program effectiveness that the institution submits as part of their program proposal.
7. The Committee on Accreditation will hear reports on results of Experimental Programs and innovations that have yielded success. The Committee may recommend to the Commission a review of Program Standards based on data and scholarship regarding educator preparation reported by Experimental Programs.

Experimental Program Standards

Standard 1: Program Rationale

The experimental program proposal provides a credible rationale for the program, one which draws upon relevant and recent scholarly and research literature in the field. Experimental programs have a scholarly focus and proposals are research-based with a clear plan for investigating an issue of significant importance for the theory and practice of education preparation.

Standard 2: Research Question

The proposal clearly identifies the topic of investigation and submits one or more research questions, hypotheses or objectives that the experimental program is expected to address and relate to fundamentally significant issues in the selection, preparation or assessment of prospective professional educators.

Standard 3: Program Design

The proposal submits a complete and thorough description of the proposed program. The proposal includes details of the activities and coursework that candidates will complete as well as indicators of outcomes of candidate competence for program completion. The proposal must outline all essential elements of the research design as appropriate to the nature of the inquiry. This includes the intended outcomes and evidence that will be collected.

Standard 4: Research Design

The proposal clearly illustrates the connection of the Program Philosophy and Goals, Research Questions and Program Design to the implementation of the experimental program and investigation of the issue(s). The proposal includes details of how the institution plans to collect evidence in relation to the issue(s) being investigated as well as a timeline for the investigation. Standards of scholarship in the social sciences should be applied as part of the peer and staff review used to approve, monitor and review proposals and reports.

Standard 5: Anticipated Outcomes

The proposal identifies the anticipated outcomes of implementing the experimental program and how the implementation and investigation will add to the knowledge base of educator preparation. The proposal includes details about how the efficacy of the program will be assessed and how the program will ensure that program completers have the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to work in California's diverse public schools and support students in meeting the *state*-adopted student standards.

Standard 6: Contribution to Scholarship and the Profession

The proposal clearly shows that the knowledge generated by implementing the experimental program will improve the quality of the service authorized by the credential. The program and the scholarship generated from the research should lead or have the potential to lead to improvements in the preparation of professionals and guide education policy.

Procedures for submitting an experimental program for Commission approval:

An experimental program can be developed and submitted at any time in the seven year accreditation cycle. Once approved, the program is incorporated into the institution's accreditation cohort activities.

- Institution or program sponsor identifies an issue, question, or problem that can be addressed through a preparation program that varies from the Commission's adopted program standards.
- Institution or program sponsor submits a 3-5 page paper describing the issue, question, or problem to the Commission.
- Staff reviews the proposal brief and provides technical assistance to the institution or program sponsor in developing the full program proposal.
- Institution or program sponsor submits the full proposal, addressing the Standards for Experimental Programs.
- Program proposal is reviewed by a panel of educators (peer review). Panel may ask for additional information if the proposal does not initially meet the Experimental Program Standards.
- Program goes to the Committee on Accreditation for approval once the panel of educators agrees that the proposal meets the Experimental Program Standards.
- Program begins implementation.
- Program participates in all accreditation activities in concert with the institution or program sponsors schedule.
- Program submits biennial reports focused on measures of candidate competence.
- Program participates in the program assessment by submitting the approved program proposal and any biennial reports completed to date.
- Candidates, graduates, faculty, and employers from the program participate in the site review activities as scheduled.
- Program submits an evaluation of the program according to the approved Research Design.
- Staff reviews biennial and evaluation reports. Recommendations for program continuance or interventions will be made to the Committee on Accreditation.